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CHAPTER VI

DRESS AND WEAPONS

THE BEARD AND HAIR; TATTOOING; BODY BELTS

The Rwala devote much attention to the body,[1] especially to the hair and beard. Almost everyone can shave and cut hair, and they render this service to one another, as they have no mirrors to shave by. Calling on his comrade with the words: "Shave me, *ḥassenni* (or *zajjenni*, or *eḥlekni*)," a Rwejli sits down on his heels and patiently waits till his friend has prepared his soap, razor, and scissors. If he merely wishes the beard growing under his chin on the throat, *ǧarǧûr*, shaved, he says: "*Ǧarǧerni.*" If he wishes the back part of his head up to the ears, *ṣôra*, shaved, he asks: "*Ṣawwerni.*" Otherwise the barber will shave both the half of the back of his head and the beard under the chin, trim his thin chin beard, *aḥje* (or *daḳne*), and his goatee, *'adesa*, shave off his side whiskers, *'awâreẓ*, trim his moustache, *šwâreb*, clipping off its ends, *subaḳ*, and comb the hair over the forehead, cutting it short, *ḳuṣṣa*, at the same time. Individuals especially careful of their appearance have their front hair made into two, four, six, or even as many as eight plaits, *ḳrûn*. A man wearing his hair

[1] The big toe (thumb) is called *bkâm*; the second and third toes, *ḥonṣor*; the fourth toe, *ḥonṣjor*; the little toe, *ḥonṣjor*; a finger (or toe) nail, *ẓufer*; the toes, *aṣâbi' ar-riǧlên*; the sole of the foot, *ḫrîf*; the arch of the foot, *ḥabd ar-riǧel*; the heel, *'aḳib*; the instep, *'ard*; the ankle, *'aṣeṣm ab-ar-ruḫam* or *ḥa'ab*; the ankle joint, *miṣakk*; Achilles tendon, *'arṣab*; the shank, *aḳ*; the calf, *ǧarbû'a*; the extensor of the leg, *'aṣa ar-rukba*; the knee-cap, *seddle*; the hollow of the knee, *mâbar*; the thigh, *faḫd*; the mons Veneris, *ḥadda*; the penis, *'ajr* or *rabb*; the testicles, *ḥaǧâda*; the glans, *fa'a*; the groins, *ḥdera*; the hip, *wirê*; the buttock, *ḥoṭijje* or *fî*; the navel, *sirra*; the loins, *ḥamb*; the ribs, *ǧê'*; the breast, *ṣadr*; the breast nipples, *did*; the ensiform cartilage, *ṣaṣrîf al-ḥalb*; the stomach, *ḥabd*; the intestines, *ḥoṣâda*; the kidney, *ḥelwa*; the spleen, *ṭḥâl*; the liver, *atâr*; the gall, *mgadra*; the heart, *ḥalb* or *ṣanâḍ al-ḥalb*; the lungs, *rije*; the back, *ẓahr*; the lower part of the spine, *dṣajfaḍ*; the vertebrae, *ḥarwa aṣ-ẓahr*; the shoulder-blade muscles, *daffa*; the shoulder blade, *ḥatf*; the small of the back, *rummâna al-ḥatf*; the neck, *ruṣuba*; the two fleshy parts of the back of the neck, *'alba*; the hollow between them, *uṣejra*; the atlas, *fâ'da*; the collar bone, *turṣa*; the pit of the throat, *ǧuṣjra*; the external jugular vein, *warîd*; the throat, *ḥarrâṣa*; the Adam's apple, *arwâa*; the chin, *'adasa*; the jaws, *ḥadâk*; the lips, *ḥardîṣam*, or *ḥaldâṣam*; the corners of the mouth, *ldâṣ*; the cheeks, *uṣjnât*; the nose, *ṣânim*; the nostrils, *mandîṣer*; the ridge of the nose, *'arnâsa*; the bridge of the nose, *muṣjras*; the cheek bone, *rummâna*; the eyes, *'uṣûn*; the pupil of the eye, *ṣbaṣ*; the eyelids, *ṣfûn*; the eyelashes, *rimâl*; the eyebrow, *ḥdâṣ*; the forehead, *ṣabba*; the temples, *ṣanâbar*; the ear, *ṣdan*; the lobe of the ear, *ṣhame*; the teeth, *asnân*; the incisors, *ṣanâṣe*; the four eye teeth, *nâbân*; the molars, *rabâ*; the glottis, *ḥlaṣt al-mount*; the gullet, *bal'ûm*; the top of the head, *ṣâṣe*; the cranium, *ḥâwt ar-rês*; the brain, *dmâṣ*; the elbow joint, *'aṣd*; the elbow, *ḥâ'*; the forearm, *ṣrâ'*; the arm hollow, *ḥarṣer*; the back of the hand, *wâṣ*; the palm of the hand, *ḥaff*; the thumb, *bâkam*; the index finger, *ṣaswâl*; the little finger, *ḥonṣjor*; the hand, *ṣad* (or *îd*; dual. *îdâ*; pl. *îdên*); three hands, *ṣalâṣ îdâṣ*; five feet, *ḥamse riǧlên*.

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292 cloth is known in the trade as *ǧôḫ mâkûd*, common cloth as *ǧôḫ ḫafîf*. *Mezâwi* is a silk caftan worn by wealthy women over the dress, *ṯowb*. It has narrow sleeves and covers the arms down to the wrists.

301 Almost every Rwala woman goes barefoot, but all possess some jewelry. Around the neck they wear a *maḫnaḳa*, or necklace of red coral; on the breast a *želâde*, or pendant of glass pearls; on the elbows small black glass rings, *ma'âẓed*; on the wrists similar trinkets, *sbat*; above the ankles small glass or copper rings, *ḫǧûl*; in the ears copper rings, *turžijje*; on the fingers rings, *ftâḫ*; and sometimes in the right nostril a copper ring, *zmâm*. The women dearly love this cheap jewelry; they save up camel's hair for a long time and often steal grain in order to buy it.

292 The wealthier women wrap, *jetalaffa'en*, their heads in a covering called *šumbar*. This is a red shawl 42 centimeters wide by 3.2 meters long. They dye it black, leaving only about six centimeters as red stripes at both ends. Next they cut the shawl lengthways down the middle and sew both parts together in such a way that a covering is formed 84 centimeters wide and 1.6 meters long. If they want to wrap their heads in this shawl, *jetalaffa'en beh*, they lay one lappet on their left shoulder, stretch the shawl over the head, throw the other lappet from the right under the chin, and cover with it the lappet on the left shoulder. Then they fasten the shawl with a folded kerchief to the forehead and skull, pull both lappets up the back, and tuck up the shawl in the front till it covers the chin. Young girls like to wear both the *maḳrûna*, or large kerchief, and the *šumbar*. Both lappets of the *maḳrûna* hang loosely down the breast, while the *šumbar* is crossed under the chin. If a girl who is fond of dress, *bint ṛawjâna*, owns a *maḳrûna* only, she will not tie it to her head with the *mindîl*, dark cotton kerchief, but prefers it to fall down a little, as then her tresses can be seen to advantage.

302 Every woman likes to dye her palms and nails, and if she be old also her hair, with yellow henna, either of the Egyptian variety, *maṣrijje*, or of a variety brought from Mecca, *makkâwijje*; the latter is the better.

302 826 Both the youths and girls are fond of dyeing their eyelids black with *koḥl*, collyrium or antimony powder, using a small sharp knife, *mirwad*, in this operation. Moistening the *mir-*

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wad slightly, they touch the *kohl*, which is kept in a tiny tin box, *mikhale*, and then rub the color along the borders of the eyelids, believing that the use of *kohl* strengthens the eyesight. Many therefore even rub *kohl* on the edges of a telescope, being firmly convinced that the instrument then gives a much better view.

The woman's dress costs:

barim, body belt	½ *mejidijje*	($ 0.22½)	
towb, shirt	2 *mejidijjât*	(" 1.80)	
iwâḥi, belt	½ *mejidijje*	(" 0.22½)	
makrâna, kerchief	2 *mejidijjât*	(" 1.80)	
ʿiṭfa, head band	½ *mejidijje*	(" 0.22½)	
jibbe, jacket	2 *mejidijjât*	(" 1.80)	
mersi, cloak	3 *mejidijjât*	(" 2.70)	
mahnaka, coral necklace	4 piasters	(" 0.18)	
ʿelâde, pendant	4 "	(" 0.18)	
maʿâded, elbow ornaments	4 "	(" 0.18)	
fatha, finger ring	4 "	(" 0.18)	
zmâm, nostril ring	½ *mejidijje*	(" 0.22½)	
Total...10	*mejidijjât*, 16 piasters	($ 9.72).	

PEDDLERS; CARE FOR PERSONAL APPEARANCE; INFANTS; STAFFS AND CANES

Whatever the Rwala need for their finery and ornaments they either buy from the merchants who visit them when they are camping in the settled territory in the months of July and August, or from the peddlers, who accompany them the whole year through, even going to the inner desert with them. A peddler or wandering merchant is called either Rhejbâwi or Kubejsi: Rhejbâwi after the ancient town of ar-Rahba, Kubejsi after his native place, the little town of al-Kubejsa. The terms Rhejbâwi and Kubejsi have come to mean any wandering seller of textiles or general merchandise and are now applied even to merchants known to hail from other places. Thus a peddler from Bagdad is called a Rhejbâwi Baġdâdi or Kubejsi Baġdâdi. When a youth overfond of dress, *dâhi*, visits a wandering merchant to be measured for a suit of clothes, he gives his order in the words of the ancient verse: "Measure me, O merchant! for a shirt with long sleeves, measure me, O merchant! O Rhejbâwi! *Kaṣṣel li jâ bâʾiʿ ṣâfi erdâni kaṣṣel li jâ tâʾir jâ rhejbâwi.*"

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831 ×
539 ×

w-elja tlâḳaw ma' al-'adwân
ḥallaw 'alejhom teḥârîži.

Welcome, welcome, O Farḥân's Arabs!
Hail to her, who dries up the spittle!
For the kinsmen of my beauty take not to flight;
They are the protectors of those who drive the booty,
And, when encountering the enemy,
Discharge weapons spitting fire.

The lover welcomes and praises the relatives of his sweetheart. *Hala* for *ahla, ahlan, jâ-hla, jâ hala.* *Ḏâbel ar-rîž* is a charming beauty, with whom one immediately falls in love so passionately that the saliva of the mouth dries up as if one were in a fever. The *mesâwîž* are warriors driving the captured herds. As they have to prevent the animals from escaping, they are unable to defend themselves properly and could easily be killed by the pursuing enemy. [826]

1. *Jâ râčeb alli ber-redef teḳel marži*
   azwâl rebden muǧaffalen ma' az-zerâži
2. *w-lâ ḥamâm mrawweḥen leh al-berǧi*
   'oḳb al-mežîl mrawweḥen binze'âži
3. *jâ resel jâ-lli lal-ma'âzîb terži*
   lâzem tšûf an-nâr miṯl as-serâǧi
4. *jad'ik bejt beh meǧâles w-herǧi*
   râ'ih mâ ḥâšat jammeh ḫarâǧi
5. *semi marṣûf al-ḥadam jâ-bu marǧi*
   salab 'adîli min ẓamîri w-mâ ǧi
6. *salab 'adîli salab kâbûn serǧi*
   w-'ajni tekubb ṛurûb mojjen ḥamâǧi
7. *'alejh min ṛâli-l-meṭâmîn derǧi*
   ẓâfen 'ala sâḳen teḳel 'aẓm 'âǧi
8. *alli banat bel-ḳalb ḳaṣran w-berǧi*
   banat bešam'en lown ḳaṣr al-ḫafâǧi
9. *'aḏrûb aḫûha surbeteh teḳel 'arǧi*
   jaṭni-lja ṭârat 'ajûn al-harâǧi
10. *jâ lâjmen maḳṭû' mâ 'âd jarǧi*
    jowm al-ḥara' mâ 'âd 'endeh jidâǧi.

1. O thou who ridest a she-camel whose back has almost
   to be climbed by a ladder,
   [Whose speed is] like clouds of dust in the blue air
   raised by startled ostriches,

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A Bedouin who has led in his mare to the stud horse, mounts her afterwards and rides around the camp until he meets a girl, to whom he says: "O daughter, just now I have led in my mare." If the girl answers: "Be comforted with

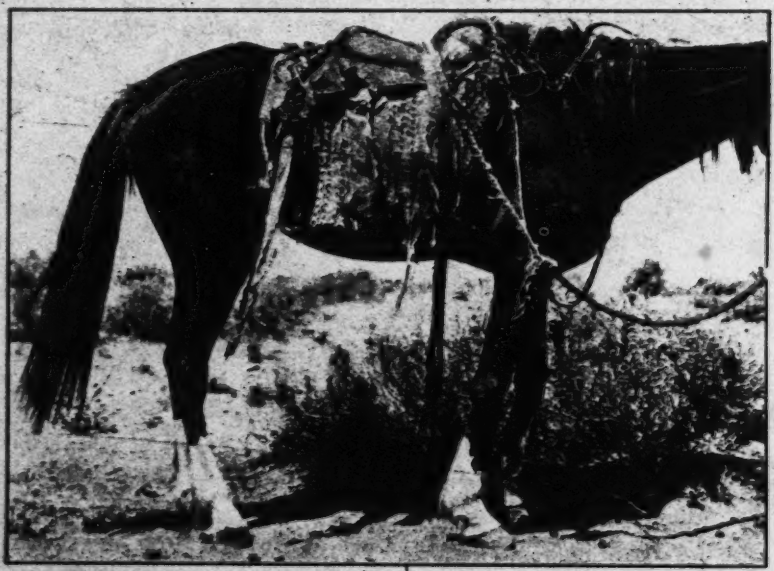

FIG. 57—A harnessed mare.

the glad tidings that she will bring thee a filly, *ebšer bemohra*, both the owner of the mare and his whole kin rejoice, for this is a favorable sign, and they all expect confidently that the girl's prophecy will come true.

It is a common belief among the Rwala that a one-eyed person is the bearer of misfortune. If a man meets one so afflicted, in order to destroy his unhappy influence he turns over a large stone, thus burying the bad omen. Hence the proverb: "If thou meetest a one-eyed person, turn over a large stone; *elja šuft al-ʿawar oklob ḥağar*." Nobody embarking on a journey of importance will have for his guide a man with his right and left upper eyeteeth missing, *afraḳ as-sinnên*, or one with blue eyes, *azraʳ* (sic) *al-ʿajnên*, for then nothing would succeed. Woe to those having intercourse with a woman whose breast is covered with down, or with a man without any beard or without down on any part of his body, *aǧnas al-*

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ǧenûs al-ḥurmat al-halba' w-ar-raǧol al-melûs, as both are the cause of various mishaps! A Bedouin who marries a person that is quarrelsome and censorious, *al-ḥurmat ad-da"âja w-anna"âja*, is never prosperous but will always be unhappy, both he and his children. A scolding woman wishes ill to her opponent in the following sentences:

"Sab' hal-waǧh. May [a wild beast, demon] tear this face!"

"Sa'an jasba' haš-šâreb. May [the demon] utterly tear up this mustache!" *Šâreb*, mustache, means man in general.

"Kow beh. Tekwû (or *tekû*) *bak.* Burn him! May they burn thee! [Mayest thou become so ill that] red-hot iron must be applied to thee!"

"Ḥamdet ar-rîḥ. May the breeze of thy good fortune cease to blow towards thee!"

"Ṛâjbt as-sa'ad. May success be far from thee!"

"Ḥejb as-sedd. Mayest thou be disappointed in thy most secret wishes!"

"Mowt an-nâr. Mayest thou go to hell after thy death!"

"Allâh jil'an zên hal-hdûm alli mâ hi 'al-âdmi mâr 'ala 'ûd aš-šǧara. May Allâh curse this fine dress so that it will not garb a man but the stalk of a perennial!" This means that the person dressed in that suit is, for lack of success, to dry up as the stalk of a perennial dries up when there has been no rain for several years.

In making agreements the Rwejli must be very careful. If he agrees with his comrade that they will help each other faithfully in both good and bad days, *'ala-z-zên w-aš-šên*, he must not change the order of the words and say *"'ala-š-šên w-az-zên,"* if he would not bring bad luck upon himself.

If a sorrel horse escapes from a raider and, dragging its rein, runs about in terror in front of the troop, the other riders try to drive it aside with their spears, shouting: "May Allâh forgive thee! *Semḥeč* (or *Sebḥeč*)." They know that it brings bad luck to them, yet they will not kill it as it deserves and therefore cry *"Semḥeč,"* instead of *"Seb'eč*, May He destroy thee!" A sorrel with a white spot on both the right and left hind leg is called *mšaželbe* because it throws its rider frequently. A mare who scratches with her forehoofs continually will ruin her rider as surely as a wife who cannot keep order, *al-faras al-ḥarrâṭa w-al-marat aš-ša"âṭa* (or *šarrâṭa*). A camel with a curly spot on the root of her tail, *'aker-*

754 that has thus harmed him. A person having the evil eye is called *madri*, and the person he bewitches *ma'jûn*. A man who
[826] lacks both upper eyeteeth or one who has blue eyes is undoubtedly able to bewitch and is therefore carefully avoided by all his acquaintances. If a traveler is seen approaching his tent, he hears from all the neighboring tents: "Avoid the bewitcher's tent! Go to the right, to the right! *Lâ temarr 'ala bejt al-madri jemînak jemînak.*"

754 A bewitched person feels at once great weakness, his eyes
755 become dim, and he is subject to fainting fits. Above the heart of a bewitched child a blue spot soon appears, as if caused by a hard blow. A bewitched animal gets a tumor on the heart the size of a fist, and clotted blood is found under it when killed. Fumigation is the usual cure in such cases. If the bewitcher is known, two or three threads are torn from the hem of his garment and laid on red-hot coals, and the stricken person is fumigated with the smoke from them. The head of a bewitched animal is held over a dish of red-hot coals and smoldering *šîḥ* plants in such a way that the smoke must enter its nostrils. Frequently the bewitched has much difficulty in urinating. To help him, the Bedouins shoot a porcupine, from which they extract the gall bladder and, pressing out its contents into a little water, *jemûṣûn mrejreh bel-moje*, they drip it into the nostrils of the sick person. Bewitched people and even animals are the most easily bitten by poisonous snakes.

754 Whoever is possessed of the evil eye also has the power to restore the bewitched to his former health. In the Rassâlîn clan there lived at the time when these studies were made a fellow named Na"ûs eben 'Ajde to whose evil eye much misfortune was attributed. Once he bewitched, *ẓarab*, a young girl pretty both in face and figure, *ḥsejjene min židdâmah w-min warâha*. It happened while she was fetching water; when she returned to her tent, she began to stagger and finally fainted. On recovering she was unable to stand on her feet. When asked by her frightened mother the cause of her condition, the girl only said: "Na"ûs looked at me fixedly; he bewitched me," and fainted again, *ertamât min ǧedîd*. With much lamentation the mother then reported to the father what the daughter had just told her, and he, calling his sons and relatives to his aid, ran to Na"ûs' tent, threatening him with death if he did not take back instantly the look which had injured his daughter. Na"ûs swore by all

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nowm sâs al-lowm, sleep is the cause of reproofs, because at night, when the guards are fast asleep, the activities of the Bedouin's enemies, whether men or beasts, are most successful. He that keeps awake can prevent evil. *Šelâfiḥ* implies the lack of a certain thing; thus, "*Waredna hal-mokr sakweh šelâfiḥ*" means "We wanted to water in this rock cistern, but there is little water there." 4. *Ar-rizk betûl al-ḫaṭa'*; he whose pace is longer will win more, can go farther. *Fiḥ* (sing., *feiḥa*) are good-tempered, enduring she-camels. The rider of such will reach distant places where he can get booty more easily. 5. *Jidûk* signifies the continual motion of the rider's two heels, which tear the animal's hide by constantly rubbing against it. '*Ajrât an-neza*' are she-camels used for raids to distant places. A raiding troop cannot spend the night in a large plain surrounded by mountains, *ad-daww*, for it is impossible to build a fire there; it would be seen far around. The she-camels must, therefore, exert their whole strength to cross such a plain as quickly as possible in order to reach a region with deep, hidden gullies before sunset. 6. Behind the camel saddle the Bedouins fasten one or two pairs of many-colored ribbons, *sefâjef*, which, fluttering with every step the she-camel makes, are seen now far behind the animal, now high above or below it. The waving of the ends of these ribbons reminds the onlooker of the motions the falconer makes with a piece of cloth when he wants to coax a falcon to return to him. These cloth pieces, *malâwiḥ*, also float out, to vanish the next moment, according to the motions made by the falconer. 8. The guard watching the camels is called *ğanab*. For this duty the bravest youths, as a rule, are selected, objects of warm desire on the part of many a married woman dissatisfied with her easy-going, often cowardly husband. A woman of this sort is known as *ṭamûḥ*. She would not bear sons resembling their father. 9. *Akwaḥ al-'ajn*, means "[a good marksman] half closed his eye." Such eyes send out sure death, for they are *ḏuwâbiḥ*, killers.

Seize Opportunity When It Offers

Elja' habbat rijâḥak hebb ma'ha
w-lâ budd illa-r-rijâḥ min as-sukûn
w-en darrat nijâḳak w-ehtelebha
w-lam jidra-l-ḥwâr limin jekûn.

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539x

Jâ-bu ṯemânen ḏubbalen wa-rhâf
ʿeḏâb liṭarrâd al-hawa
jâ žiḏleten riš an-naʿâm erdâf
jelʿab beha ṣafž al-hawa.

O thou with eight teeth fine and small,
Which so torment him who is given to flirting!
O braids above the forehead, as thick as the ostrich's feathers,
With which nothing but a strong breeze can play.

Ṯemân are the four lower and the four upper incisors. The finer and smaller, the prettier they are. When they are shown by a smiling beauty, the passion of amorous men is inflamed to a high degree. *Ṭarrâd* is a warrior who, circling on his mare, attacks the enemy with the one aim of defeating them. No sooner has he vanquished one, than he throws himself on another. *Ṭrâd* is a hand-to-hand fight, also a mock battle in which the struggles of a real battle are imitated. It is often performed in honor of an esteemed guest. *Ṭrâd al-ḫejl* has the same meaning as *leʿeb al-ḫejl*, mock battle, cavalry play. *ʿArâẓa* has nothing in common with *ṭrâd*. In *ʿarâẓa* the warriors defile, one by one, before the standing chief, assure him of their fidelity, and by uttering their war cry raise one another's war spirit. He that devotes much of his time to love affairs also resembles a *ṭarrâd*, because, having gained the victory over one beauty, he leaves her in order to win the favor of another. The feathers on the hips of an ostrich are the thickest. A beauty's *žiḏle* should, likewise, be so thick and heavy that nothing except a strong breeze could move it. *Safž* or *ṣalf* is a strong, sudden gust of wind.

[826 832] [541] [703]

Jâ šowḳ jâ dakkâk al-ḥejl
jâ merteči fowḳ al-ḥani
eḳhar ḳaʿûdak ʿenda rkûẓ al-ḫejl
abi-ẓmanak w-atrok hali.

O sweetheart mine who givest forth a fragrance as if pounding cardamom!
O thou who supportest thyself by the bent litter pole!
Stop thy camel at the cavalry assault,
For I will desert my kin to guarantee thy safety.